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JESUS CHRIST *the Prophet*
whom Moses foretold.

A 693. d 6
SERMON

Preached at the
Cathedral-Church
OF
NORWICH.

JUNE the 28th, 1724.

To which is added,
A POSTSCRIPT explaining a Passage in
St. Paul's EPISTLE to the Galatians.

By THOMAS BULLOCK, M. A.
and Chaplain to the RIGHT REVEREND the
LORD BISHOP of *Norwich.*

Published by His LORDSHIP's Order.

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Jesus Christ the Prophet
whom Moses foretold.

SERMON

Preached at the

Cathedral-Church

OF

MORRIS CH.

Given the 20th. day.

of the month.

of the year 1850.

By Thomas Blinck, M.A.

and Organist to the Church.

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ACTS iii. 22, 23.

For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear in all Things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass, that every Soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People.



THESE Words are a Citation out of Deut. xviii. 18, 19. and are applied by St. Peter to our Blessed Lord, as spoken with respect to him. The Occasion of the Discourse,

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wherein

wherein this Application is made, was this: *Peter* and *John*, going up into the Temple, found there a Man lame from his Birth, whom they immediately healed, by commanding him in the Name of the Lord JESUS to rise up and walk. The People that frequented the Temple (it being then the Hour of Prayer) were filled with Wonder and Amazement at what had happened; which *Peter* perceiving, he took Occasion from thence to preach unto them the Lord JESUS: Assuring them first of all, That the Miracle wrought was not owing to their own Power or Holiness; but that the Name of CHRIST only (thro' Faith) had done it, and given the Man that perfect Soundness, of which they all were Witnesses: Even the Name of that JESUS, whom they had not only delivered up and denied in the Presence of *Pilate*, but whose Death they had desired and procured. This very JESUS (he goes on to tell them) had the GOD of their Fathers glorified, and raised up from the Dead, whereof he and the rest of the Apostles were Witnesses; and of which the Miracle, they had

had then wrought in his Name, and thro' Faith in him, was a further Proof.

Thus far we have the direct Proof urged by the Apostle, in Justification of CHRIST and of his Divine Commission. The Topicks were, The Resurrection of CHRIST, their own sensible Knowledge of it, and the further Confirmation thereof, by the Power they had of working Miracles in his Name.

BUT the Apostle, sensible that he was speaking to Jews, who were grievously offended in CHRIST; and the more so, because of his Sufferings, of which they had been the Authors; goes on to obviate that Prejudice in these Words:
** And now, Brethren, I wot that thro' Ignorance ye did it, as did also your Rulers. But those Things which GOD before had shewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that CHRIST should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. As if he had said, I do not say these Things to irritate or reproach you with his Death: I impute it rather to your Ignorance,*
 B 2 *than*

than your Malice. But I mention it to satisfy you, that your Prejudice against him, by reason of his Sufferings, is without just Ground. For what happened to him in this respect was directly spoken of by your own Prophets, as that which should befall the *Messiah*; and what you did to him thro' Ignorance tended to complete in him the Character of the CHRIST.

HAVING thus answered their principal Objection, he exhorts them to Repentance, and to believe the Gospel. ** Repent therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, that the Times of Refreshing may come from the LORD, and that he may send JESUS CHRIST, who before was preached unto you, whom the Heavens must receive, untill the Times of Restitution (or Consummation) of all Things (that is, till all Things be accomplished) which GOD hath spoken by the Mouth of all his Prophets, since the World began.* Then follow the Words of the Text cited from *Moses*.

BUT

* Acts iii. 19.

BUT I would observe, That this Citation does not relate to the Verse immediately preceding, but to the Exhortation given at the 16th Verse, with which it has a natural and necessary Connexion. And this will appear more clear by Reading them together: *Repent therefore and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A Prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all Things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every Soul, which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the People.* In this light, the Words of Moses are very proper to enforce the Apostle's Exhortation; and thus applied, the meaning thereof will be plainly this. Since GOD has raised up his Son JESUS, and thereby justified him against all your Prejudices; I advise you to repent of your Folly and Wickedness in putting him to Death: And that the Guilt thereof may not lie heavy upon you, be converted
and

and become obedient to his Doctrine; remembering what *Moses* himself has told you, for whom ye pretend so great Veneration, That *GOD* would raise you up a Prophet like unto him. And who more like to *Moses*, than that *JESUS*, whom we preach unto you? And if *JESUS* be that Porphet like to *Moses*, it is *Moses's* Advice, That you should *bear him in all Things whatsoever he shall say unto you*. But if you hear him not, *Moses* himself has told you what the Event will be, That *every Soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the People*. Thus I have given a brief Account of the Prophecy, and the Manner in which it was applied to *CHRIST* by *St. Peter*.

BUT this Subject will require a more distinct Examination: Because we are told, “ That the Citations of Prophecies from the *Old Testament*, said to be fulfilled in the *New*, do not obviously, and literally, and agreeably to the *Context*; relate to the Purposes for which they are cited by the

“ Authors

“ Authors of the *New Testament* *; but
 “ do so plainly relate, in their obvious
 “ and primary Sense, to other Matters,
 “ than those which they are produced
 “ to prove,—— That the *Old and New*
 “ *Testament* have no manner of Con-
 “ nexion in that respect, but are in an
 “ irreconcilable State †.” This is the
 Charge in general. But the Prophecy
 now before us, will (I believe) be found
 a very good Exception to this general
 Charge, because in its *obvious* and *lite-
 ral* Sense it does more properly and
strictly relate to CHRIST than to any
 other: And in its full and complete
 Sense, could (I think) relate to none
 other, than him. For it was observed
 by *Ezra*, who out-lived the latest of the
 Jewish Prophets, That *there arose not*
a Prophet in Israel like unto Moses,
whom the LORD knew Face to Face,
in all the Signs and the Wonders,
which the LORD sent him to do. But
 that JESUS did come up to *Moses* in
 this and every other Respect will evi-
 dently appear, by comparing such Pas-
 sages of the *Old and New Testament* to-
 gether,

* Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Re-
 ligion. Page 120.

† Ibid. p. 48.

ther, wherein the Acts of both are recorded.

It is true, indeed, another Construction has been made of the Words of this Prophecy. It has been alledged as a Proof, That GOD intended to give the *Jews a continued Succession of Prophets* under the Legal Dispensation. Whether this Construction be a just one or not ; it must be allowed, that it is neither *obvious* nor *literal*. On the other hand, There needs neither *Figure* nor *Allegory* to make them applicable to CHRIST ; but the more *strict* and *literal* the Construction we put on them, the more unavoidably will they referr to CHRIST, and next to impossible it will be to make them applicable to any one but him. But to speak more distinctly on this Head, I shall observe the following Method.

I. I SHALL offer some Arguments to prove that this Prophecy does in its *natural* and *genuine* Sense, *directly* relate to CHRIST, and that
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it never was fully and *strictly* completed in any one, but him.

II. SUPPOSING it ought to be understood of a *Series or Succession of Prophets*, that (even in that Sense) it would, without the Help of *Figure* or *Allegory*, be justly applicable to CHRIST, and will afford room for solid and substantial Reasoning in Justification of Him and his Doctrine. From whence I shall take Occasion

III. To remove some other Objections and Difficulties raised about the Proofs offered in Favour of Christianity. And,

I. I SHALL offer some Arguments to prove, That the Prophecy in dispute does, in it's *natural* and *genuine* Sense, *directly* relate to CHRIST, and that it never was fully and *strictly* completed in any one, but Him : The Prophecy is a very plain one, so plain, that one would hardly think it capable of different Constructions. A particular Prophet is spoken of. It is said, that he

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should

should be of *their Brethren* (that is, an *Israelite*.) These are general Characters, such as are applicable to any of the Prophets under the Jewish Dispensation. But the Words that follow contain a very remarkable Restriction, *Like unto me* (that was *Moses*.) A very useless and a very improper Addition, if it were intended only of a *Series of Prophets*, who should succeed *Moses* in an ordinary Way! For that settled Order of Prophets were in no peculiar Sense like unto *Moses*. They had no special Commission, they had no new Law, no new Institutes of Religion to publish; they had usually no Credentials, no Seals of a Divine Commission. Their Business in short was, to explain, and inculcate the Practice of, the Law already given by *Moses*. Nor is it supposed, that they were infallibly directed even in this: For it is observed of many of their Prophets, that they erred in Vision, and stumbled in Judgment. Wherein then was that *Likeness* so particularly taken Notice of in the Prophecy? Did it consist in being of the same Profession and Family with *Moses*?

ses? In these indeed they were like him; but this could not be the Similitude intended; because these are first particularly specified, and the Likeness to *Moses* is an additional Character, which we find explained in the following Words: *And I will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him.* Which Passage plainly supposes an extraordinary Commission, bespeaks a Prophet immediately sent from GOD with some new Revelation, to publish, as from GOD immediately, something not before revealed.

I ADD further, That the Prophet here spoken of, was to give some extraordinary Sign or Proof of his Commission, otherwise he was to be rejected; *Thou shalt not be afraid of him.* Now it is not so much as pretended, that the settled Order of Prophets, whose Business it was to explain and inculcate the Law already given, had constantly, or were usually to have, any such Credentials of a Divine Commission. It was not expected, that they should give
C 2 any

any Sign to confirm a Doctrine before confirmed, when it was first delivered. But the Prophet, *here* spoken of, is supposed to have something particular and extraordinary to reveal, something that required a Sign to give it Weight, and to confirm his Authority that revealed it. For the Objection being stated *, *How shall we know the Word which the LORD hath not spoken?* It is answered †, *When a Prophet speaketh in the Name of the LORD, if the Thing follow not, nor come to pass; that is the Thing which the LORD hath not spoken; but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

AND tho' we allow, there were at different Times extraordinary Prophets under the Law, who had extraordinary Credentials of their Commission; yet they were not compared to *Moses* or reckoned like him. The chief of their Business was, to interpose in Times of gross Corruption, when the Law had been remarkably neglected; to awak-

* Deut. xviii. 21.

† Ibid ver. 22.

en Men, either by unusual Signs, or by severe Threatnings and Denunciations of Vengeance, to a Sense of their Duty. Whereas the Business of *Moses* was, to deliver to them, as from God immediately, a new System of Religion, Statutes and Ordinances and Judgments, to be the rule of their Conduct. And in this respect there was none like to *Moses*, none that resembled him in this principal Part of his Character, till CHRIST came to establish a new Covenant with us, and to teach us the way of God more perfectly.

AND it seems to me very plain from the Context, that there was a direct and particular View to the Introduction of this New Dispensation. For the Prophet having told them, that God would *raise them up another, like unto him*, at the Fifteenth Verse; and calling to mind, how much they were terrified at hearing the Voice of God, and seeing the great Fire upon the Mount, when the old Dispensation was delivered; He tells them, that God had regard to what they then desired, saying,

saying, *Let me not hear again the Voice of the LORD my GOD, neither let me see this great Fire any more :* That therefore, instead of introducing the New Dispensation in the same terrible manner, He would *raise them up a Prophet, put Words into his Mouth, and he should speak unto them whatsoever GOD should think fit to command,* and it should not be ushered in with a terrible Voice as the Law was. Let any one judge, whether such a Caution could have been in any wise needful, if he had been speaking only of the Old Law, and of the manner, in which it should afterwards be inculcated ? It could never have entered into the Thoughts of any Man to suspect, that GOD would continue to teach them the same thing over and over again in the same terrible manner. But, supposing the Prophet to be speaking with respect to a New Revelation, the caution was plainly necessary : Because they would naturally have apprehended, if this Caution had not been given, that the *New One* would be introduced, as the *Old One* had been before it.

THUS,

THUS, whether we consider the Words by themselves, or with relation to the Context, they are strictly and properly applicable to none, but a particular extraordinary Prophet, such as CHRIST was, by whom a New Dispensation was to be introduced. But however for Argument's Sake, let us suppose that the Words of this Prophecy were intended *indefinitely of a Series or Succession of Prophets*, it will notwithstanding plainly appear.

II. THAT, even in this *indefinite Sense*, it is, without the help of *Figure* or *Allegory*, justly applicable to CHRIST, and will afford room for solid and substantial reasoning in Justification of *Him* and his Doctrine: To make this matter clear, I will alter the reading of the Prophecy, so as to express that *indefinite Sense*, which some have put upon it. I will raise them up a *Succession of Prophets* from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my Words in *their* Mouths, and *they* shall speak unto them all that

I shall command *them*: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my Words, which *they* shall speak in my Name, I will require it of them.

Now I hope it will be granted, that taking the Words in this Latitude, they are at least as applicable to CHRIST, as to any one of that *Series* or *Succession of Prophets*, supposed to be meant thereby. He gave as many, as great, as uncontested outward Signs of his being a Prophet, as any one that had passed before him under that Character. He was also indisputably one of their Brethren: And if there was any Tribe, out of which a greater Prophet than ordinary, was to arise, He was of that Tribe also. He was *like to Moses*, not only in Birth and Office, but also in all the remarkable Parts of his Character. As a Lawgiver, He has visibly, and in a Manner obvious to common Sense, greatly improved and perfected the *Law* given by *Moses*; and also purged it from a great many corrupt Glosses and Interpretations put upon it by the Jewish

Jewish People. In his Behaviour and Conduct, he plainly discovered as great Steadiness and Integrity, as great Meekness and Patience, as much Prudence and good-Temper, as *Moses* did : Nor can we do his Character Justice, without saying, that He far exceeded him in all these, and every other God-like Quality and Disposition.

AND if any one should ask, as *Moses* puts the Case, *How shall we know that he had a Divine Commission, that GOD put Words into his Mouth, and that he taught nothing but what GOD commanded him?* We are willing He should be tried by *Moses's* Rule, That if the Thing (or Sign he gave) followed not, neither came to pass, that then the LORD hath not spoken by him. This was the Method the Jews took with him, when he acted and taught as a Prophet. Master, (they said) we would see a Sign from thee : What Sign shewest thou, that thou dost these Things? And tho' he had been always working Signs and Wonders among them, in such a Manner as was never

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seen in Israel; yet he indulged them and gave them a Sign, such as Man never gave, such as no false Prophet could attempt to give, Destroy this Temple (meaning his Body) and in three Days time I will raise it up again: At another time more explicitly, calling it the Sign of the Prophet Jonas; that as Jonas had been three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, so should the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth. As much as to say, You question my Authority, you suspect me as a false Prophet, and, as such, you go about to kill me: Let your Purpose be effected, and see if GOD will not vindicate me from this false Aspersion. If I am a false Prophet, you are commanded by your Law to put me to Death; and you may well imagine, that, if I die for speaking falsely in the Name of the LORD, He will not interpose to rescue me, nor suffer me to be rescued, from so just a Punishment: And yet you shall see GOD interposing on my Behalf in the most remarkable Manner, and in three Days time restoring me to Life again,

again, thereby disannulling your unjust Sentence against me, and recommending me to the World, as a Prophet the most highly favoured of him, for whom this Instance of Almighty Power shall be first exerted.

SUPPOSE then, that this Prophecy was not intended to point out any particular Prophet; but let us take it as a general Direction, what Prophets they should receive, and whom they should reject. Was not CHRIST, in every Respect, such a Prophet as is here described? Is there any one Character given, which was not strictly applicable to him? Was there any Qualification wanting in CHRIST, which is here required? Or, was CHRIST chargeable with any thing, for which a Prophet ought to be rejected? If this therefore be a general Direction to try their Prophets by; how are the *Jews* justified in rejecting him? Were they not hereby required, If a Person should offer himself to them, under such and such Characters, and with such and such Qualifications, to hearken to him, and receive him,

him, as a Prophet come from GOD? And did not CHRIST answer all those Characters? Had he not all those Qualifications? What good Reason then had they to reject *him*, which did not equally oblige them to reject *all* that went before him? Why was *Isaiab* to be received, and CHRIST refused? What did *Elijah* or *Elisha* do, which CHRIST did not equal or even exceed? Which of all the preceding Prophets resembled *Moses* more than He? Which Prophet was better justified according to the Rule prescribed by *Moses*, for distinguishing a true from a false Prophet, than He was? Did He not, as *Moses* required, give them a Sign, a most astonishing Sign, such, as no Prophet ever gave? And was not that Sign, unusual and unlikely as it was to come to pass, completely verified? Did not GOD also further justify Him, according to this Prophecy, in punishing them, who would not hearken to Him, as He said he would do to such, as would not hearken to that Prophet, whom He should send? Did not that Generation which condemned Him, suffer in the
 most

most lamentable and unheard of Manner? And do not their Posterity, who still continue to reject Him, still lie under the same Curse? For from that Time to this, they have not been suffered to be any more a People; but instead of being (according to their original Institution) a People separated from the rest of the World for the Service of GOD, they have been dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth, and are reserved as lasting Monuments of the exact Completion of the Words of their own Prophet.

How justly therefore might CHRIST and his Apostles appeal to these Words of *Moses*? Take them in which Sense you will, they that reject him are condemned thereby. Take them in a *strict* Sense, as respecting some particular Prophet, and they are applicable to none but CHRIST. Take them in a *latitude* of Signification, as spoken *indefinitely*, of a *Succession of Prophets*, and this way CHRIST must be *included*; nor can He be *excluded*, without *excluding* all the Prophets that went before Him,
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and thereby making the Prophecy entirely insignificant.

I HOPE then I have set this Prophecy, and the Reasoning from it in such a Light, as not to need the Help of *Figure* or *Allegory* to make it applicable to CHRIST. You see we can reason from it *strictly* and *according to Scholastick Rules*; and the Arguments drawn from thence have as much Force, as the Authority of *Moses* can give them. But to set this Matter beyond Exception, I will proceed in the

III. AND last Place, To consider some Objections and Difficulties raised against the Proof, which we have drawn from hence in Favour of Christianity. It may perhaps be objected, That the Rule, here prescribed by *Moses* for the Tryal of Prophets, will admit of some Exceptions: Because it is supposed, that a false Prophet may give a Sign, and that Sign may come to pass. The Words are: * *If there arise among you a Prophet— and giveth thee*

* Deut. xiii. 1, &c.

a Sign, or a Wonder, and the Sign or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods; — Thou shalt not hearken to the Words of that Prophet.

This (I think) is the only Exception made by *Moses* to the forementioned Rule: and we readily admit it. But can any thing be gathered from thence to justify the *Jews* in rejecting CHRIST? Nothing. CHRIST was so far from being liable to this Exception, that He was more than ordinarily justified from it. He was so far from attempting, His Doctrine was so far from having any Tendency to pervert them from the Worship and Service of the One Onely True GOD; that his Doctrine brought over the *Heathen* World, who had from Ages immemorial followed strange Gods, to the Worship of the GOD of *Israel*. In this most important Particular, He did vastly more than *Moses* and all the preceding Prophets (for many Ages) had done before Him. They were hardly able, with all their Endeavours, to preserve that *One People* free from Idolatry. His Doctrine brought over whole Nations

Nations, and People, and Languages from the Idolatry, which they had always been bred up in, and which had been handed down to them from their Forefathers for many Generations. Nor was He hereby only justified from the Exception made by *Moses*: But still much more so, in the Completion of the most clear, frequent, and remarkable Prophecy, that is to be met with in all the *Old Testament*. He became hereby, in the strictest Sense of the Prophet's Words *, *A Light to the Gentiles*. Thro' || him all the Ends of the Earth remembered themselves, and turned unto the LORD. † From the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, the Name of GOD became great among the Gentiles. Upon this Account, * All the Nations of the Earth might truly be said, to be blessed in Him; and in this Respect the Heathen had the greatest Reason to praise Him. Who can consider this surprizing Prophecy, delivered at some Times when *Israel* itself was sinking under Idolatry, when there was the least Probability imaginable

* Isa. xlix. 6. || Psal. xxii. 27. † Mal. xi. * Gen. xii. 3.

imaginable of its Completion, and not be struck with the more surprizing Completion of it! Consider the Event, how every Way worthy of GOD it was! How unlikely, that any Diabolical Power should be engaged in it! How, not only without, but against human Means vigorously employed to discourage it, it succeeded under the Influence of *his* Name and Doctrine; and it must be owned, He was the Person fore-ordained of GOD to serve this great and glorious Purpose.

If it should be urged further, That (according to *Moses*) Miracles are not a sure Sign of a Divine Commission, because it is supposed, that a false Prophet may work Miracles. I answer to this, That no Doctrine, which contradicts our natural Notions and Apprehensions of GOD, or represents as true, any Thing that can clearly be proved to be false and absurd, ought to be received, tho' Miracles should be wrought to confirm it. But then I add, That when a Doctrine is liable to no Exception of this Kind, Miracles are (ac-

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cording

cording to the *Old Testament*) a sure
 Sign of a Divine Commission. And if
 we have any just Apprehensions of God,
 it is most reasonable to conceive,
 that God will never suffer greater Mi-
 racles to be wrought for our Delusion,
 than for Confirmation of the Truth.
 Because upon this Supposition, Miracles
 would be no Proof at all: And if so,
 they would never have been given,
 they would never have been prescribed
 by God, as Tests of a true Prophet.
 But 'tis manifest past Contradiction,
 that they were so prescribed and ap-
 plied in the *Old Testament*; and that,
 according to all the Rules there pre-
 scribed for the Tryal of Prophets,
 CHRIST was a True one; having
 given the same Proofs, and even great-
 er in their Kind, of his being such,
 than any other acknowledged Prophet,
 than even *Moses* himself, who was the
 Founder of their Religion.

If it should yet be urged, That tho'
 CHRIST did give the usual Proofs re-
 quisite in a true Prophet, nevertheless,
 by pretending to be a particular ex-
 traordinary Prophet prophesied of in
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the *Old Testament*, which Prophecies were not compleated in him, He therein proved himself an Impostor, and consequently ought to be rejected: We are ready to own, that this Objection is of great Weight, if it were sufficiently proved. But the Proof requisite to support it, is entirely wanting. It is not *attempted* to be proved, That there are Prophecies of the *Old Testament* relating to the *Messiah*, which were not fulfilled in our Saviour CHRIST: But on the contrary, it is insinuated, That there was no such Prophet directly spoken of therein. In answer whereto we insist, That there are a great many *clear* Prophecies, which in their *Literal* and *Obvious* Sense must be understood of some extraordinary Prophet, which had no manner of Completion, but in CHRIST. If it be not so; Let them tell us when, and by whom, that *New Covenant*, spoken of by the Prophet *Jeremy* *, was introduced. And if they pretend, That no New Covenant was intended; let them shew us what the Prophet means, by

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* Jer. xxxi. 31.

talking of a Covenant quite different from the former, and saying, *That it should not be according to the Covenant, which GOD made with their Fathers, when he brought them out of the Land of Egypt.* Let them tell us, Which of the Seed of Abraham it was in whom all the Nations of the Earth are blessed *; who besides CHRIST has yet appeared A Light to the Gentiles, and for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth †: When that other Priest of Melchizedeck's Order arose, spoken of by the Prophet David ‖: When that Time is to expire, fixed by the Prophet Daniel, for making Reconciliation for Iniquity, and bringing in everlasting Righteousness **: When that other Fountain was opened for Sin and for Uncleanness ***; where-with, not the Jews only, but many Nations also should be sprinkled, or purified ††: Who, besides CHRIST has made his Soul an Offering for Sin, by whose Stripes, we may hope to be healed †††. Let them (I say) shew us,

* Gen. xii. 3. † Isa. xlix. 6. ‖ Ps. cx. 4.
 ** Dan. ix. 24. *** Zech. xiii. 1. †† Isa. lii. 15.
 ††† Ibid. liii. 5, 10.

us, when, and in whom these, and many more *clear, express* Prophecies of like Nature, were fulfilled. On these we build our Notion of a *Messiah*, and these we say were *exactly* fulfilled in CHRIST, and in no other Person whatsoever.

BUT at present, let us suppose, what is so strenuously contended for, That the Passages of the *Old Testament*, cited and applied to CHRIST, do not so strictly relate to Him, but in their *literal* and *obvious* Sense they may be applicable to other Matters: Yet still it will appear, That the *Jews* were obliged to receive CHRIST, as a True Prophet, and to acknowledge Him to be, what He styled himself, the *Messiah*. For it has been proved already, That they had sufficient Grounds, according to the Rules given them by *Moses* to try Prophets by, to receive Him as a True Prophet. If so; let us consider, What the Business of a Prophet was: It was, either to explain, or to retrieve from Mistakes and Corruptions, a former Revelation; or else to discover something

thing not before revealed. If CHRIST then was a Prophet (that is, if He brought with him the usual and necessary Credentials of his being such, as I have already proved He did ;) then He had, by his Prophetick Office, Authority to interpret and explain a former Revelation. This being granted, I would ask, Whether it be not consistent with this Power of Interpreting, to discover a further View, had in some Passages of Scripture, than what the Letter of them obviously express?

I OWN, it would render a Prophet suspected, should he, under Pretence of Interpreting a former Revelation, endeavour to establish any Notion contradictory to the *clear, obvious, natural* Construction and Design of it. But nothing of this Kind can be objected to CHRIST, or his Apostles. If at any time they apply a Passage to CHRIST, which had perhaps a former Completion; they do not press this Application *in Opposition* to the former; but *allowing* the former, they take Notice of a *further* Completion thereof

thereof in CHRIST. To instance in one of this Kind: St. *Matthew* applies those Words of *Hosea*, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son **, to CHRIST's Return out of *Egypt*. But the Apostle does not say, that they are applicable only to CHRIST, or that they may not be understood of GOD's bringing the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*. All that can be gathered from the Evangelist's Application of this Passage to our Blessed LORD, is this: That GOD intended that remarkable Event, befalling the Children of *Israel*, his *nominal* or *adopted Son*, to answer to another Event, which should befall CHRIST his *real Son*. And is there any thing in such an Observation, inconsistent with the Character of an inspired Interpreter; Or is there any thing so absurd or improbable in this Application, as to render the Prophet, that makes it, (who has all the usual and necessary Proofs of a Divine Commission) justly suspected? It cannot be thought a thing improbable, that GOD (on whom Futurity depends) should,

* Hof. xi. 1.

in ordering one Event, have Respect unto another. And this is all that is suggested by St. Matthew, in applying the forecited Passage to CHRIST.

- THIS I think a sufficient Vindication of the Apostles, in applying some Passages of the *Old Testament* in a *typical* or *secondary* Sense to our Blessed LORD. But this Conduct of theirs will appear much more justifiable, if we consider, that the Persons living under the old Dispensation, had generally a Notion, that their Scriptures had in many Places a *further* View, than what was *literally* expressed; and did themselves often put a Sense upon them, *besides the direct and obvious one*. And I would ask any impartial Person, Whether it was not properly the Business of a Prophet *legally qualified* to interpose in such a Case, to do that *certainly*, by his Prophetick Office and Authority, which they attempted, but with a great deal of *Uncertainty*, without it? And then I would ask, Whose Interpretation, in Case of any Difference, ought to be preferred,

preferred, his or theirs? Let any one but consider the Circumstances of *Moses* and *CHRIST*, compare the Acts and Miracles recorded of both; the excellent and shining Qualities, that appeared in the Lives of the one and the other; he will find no Reason to think, but that *CHRIST* was as truly inspired in the Interpretation of the Old Law, as *Moses* was in the Delivery of it.

BUT I am far from thinking, that *CHRIST* and his Apostles put their Defence of Christianity upon any typical Application of Passages out of the *Old Testament*; their Cause did not need it, nor do I look upon such Citations as Arguments used to support their Authority; but as Interpretations of the *Old Testament*, which have the Apostles Authority to support them. We had perhaps never known, that those Words of *Hoseah*, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, had any Relation to the *Messiah*, if it had not been revealed to us by *CHRIST* or his Apostles. And now it is revealed, we do not urge it

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as a *Proof*, that JESUS was the *Messiah*; but having first found out the *Messiah*, we admit the *Application*, because it was made by Him, or by Persons having Commission from Him.

THE Prophecies upon which we build our Notion of a *Messiah*, and by which we prove, that CHRIST was the Person intended thereby, are of a different Nature, they are *direct* and *full* to the Purpose; in their *literal* and *obvious* Sense applicable to CHRIST; and in no *tolerable* Sense applicable to any other Person whatsoever. But besides this, the Reasonableness and Excellency of the Religion itself; its Consistency with the best and truest Apprehensions Men have of GOD; the unspotted Innocence, the manifest Disinterestedness, the Godlike Temper and Disposition of its Author; together with the extraordinary Interpositions of Providence (without the Concurrence of human Means) to countenance and support it, will always be to every serious impartial Mind, Arguments of sufficient Weight to embrace, and steadfastly

fastly to believe it. And if the *Lives* of Christians were but agreeable to the *Doctrines* of it, it would evidently appear, that there need be no more perfect Institution of Religion, either for the Conduct and Well-government of human Life at present, or to qualify us for a State of consummate Happiness hereafter.

F I N I S.



POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the foregoing Sermon was preached, and some time after designed for the Press, I began again to consider with myself more strictly, whether any probable Objection could be made to that Account, which I have given of such Passages of the *Old Testament*, which are, or seem to be, in a *secondary* or *typical Sense* applied to CHRIST in the *New*. And upon a Review of *The Grounds and Reasons*, &c. I perceive the Author of that Discourse triumphs much in the Use St.

Paul makes, Gal. iv. 21, &c. of the Historical Facts concerning Abraham's two Sons, Isaac and Ishmael, (as you may perceive, p. II, 93.) as if it appeared from thence, that the Apostle did not only apply Passages of the Old Testament in a *secondary or typical Sense* to CHRIST; but did also *urge* them, as *conclusive Arguments*, in Defence of Christianity against the Adversaries of it.

I might be very short with our Author on this Head, and tell him in few Words, That the Instance is not to his Purpose. Because the Apostle's Discourse, in the Place referred to, is not directed to *Unbelievers*, but to *Believers*; not to the Adversaries of Christianity, but to such as admitted JESUS to be the CHRIST, and his Doctrine to be of Divine Original. A Question had been started in the Church, *Whether Gentile Converts ought not to conform to the first Covenant, before they could be intitled to the Privileges of the second?* Whatever Reasoning therefore the Apostle uses on this Head is not to our Author's Purpose; which was to shew, not what Methods the Apostles used to *reconcile Differences among Christians*, but what Methods were taken to *make Christians*; what Arguments they used to establish Christianity, *where it was not*, and not such as were used to remove Doubts and Scruples, *where it was admitted*. Let the Apostle's Reasoning therefore in this Place be what it will, it will not follow by any Means, that this sort of Proof was ever made

made use of to establish Christianity itself; much less, that 'twas set up as the only proper Reasoning to bring Men to the Faith of CHRIST, p. 94.

I might therefore justly dismiss the Objection with this Answer. But yet I hope to make it appear, That the Apostle has put no secret mystical Meaning upon that plain Piece of History, referred to by him in his Epistle to the Galatians; that he argues from the plain Fact itself, and not from any hidden Meaning supposed to be couched under it. The Reasoning, I own, is not very obvious; but a due Consideration of the historical Facts, to which it refers, and of some parallel Places, where the Apostle argues from the same Topick, will (I believe) make it both clear and unexceptionable.

THE Piece of History, referred to by St. Paul in this and other Places, is to be met with in the Book of Genesis. When God called Abraham to send him into a strange Land to sojourn there, He made him this Promise: *I will make of thee a great Nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy Name great, and thou shalt be a Blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: And in thee shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed,* Gen. xii. 2, 3. The Promise, you will easily observe, consists of two Parts; the former Part relating to his own Family, that his Descendants should become a great Nation, and should be blessed; the latter Part respecting the

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Families of the Earth in general, that they should be blessed in him (that is) in his Seed, as it is explained *Gen. xxii. 18. In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* If we go on to enquire, upon what Consideration this gracious Promise was made and confirmed to *Abraham*; the Historian tells us, *Gen. xv. 6. That he believed in the LORD, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.* In process of Time *Ishmael* was born to *Abraham* of *Agar* his Bond-woman, *Gen. xvi. 15.* and *Abraham* seemed to desire no more, but that the Promise of a numerous and mighty Issue might be fulfilled thro' *Ishmael*, *Gen. xvii. 18. O that Ishmael might live before Thee!* But *GOD* assured him, That his Covenant or Promise, should not depend upon *Ishmael*, but should be fulfilled in *Isaac*, *My Covenant will I establish with Isaac, v. 21. In Isaac shall thy Seed be called, Gen. xxi. 12.*

THESE are the Historical Facts referred to. And from them we may observe, That the former Part of the Promise, more immediately respecting the natural Descendants of *Abraham*, did not so unalienably belong to his Seed according to the Flesh, but some might be excluded from the promised Blessing, as appears in the Case of *Ishmael*. And therefore much less unalterable must their Claim be to the latter Part of the Promise, which was made to all without Distinction. *In thee shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed.* Upon this Observation, which is very obvious, is the
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Apostle's Argument founded, *Rom. ix. 6, &c.* Not as though the Word of G O D hath taken none Effect, because many of the Seed of Abraham are excluded. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children: but in Isaac shall thy Seed be called. That is, They which are Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of G O D, (they are not reckoned as Children in the Sight of G O D) But the Children of the Promise (or Covenant) are counted for the Seed. This he goes on to illustrate from the Case of Ishmael, and likewise from that of Esau.

WE may observe further, That with regard to the latter Part of the Promise, the the *Israelites* (as such) had no peculiar Title thereto. The Promise is general, no Distinction is made of Families, all are equally included, as St. Paul infers from the same Topick, *Gal. iii. 28.* There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female; for ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS, the promised Seed.

As to the Condition or Qualification requisite to make a Man actual Partaker of the promised Blessing, we may observe, That Faith in G O D productive of sincere Obedience, was very probably intended to be the Means of obtaining the Promise; because it was upon Abraham's Faith that the Promise was made, and it is expressly recorded of him, That he believed in G O D,
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who counted it to him for Righteousness. After this manner we find St. Paul arguing from this Historical Fact, Rom. iv. 13. For the Promise, That he should be the Heir of the World, was not to Abraham, or to his Seed through the Law, but through the Righteousness of Faith. Judging it therefore very rational to suppose, That as Abraham obtained the Promise thro' Faith; so Mankind should be made Partakers of the Blessing promised, thro' the same Means. For why else was it recorded? as the Apostle argues, ver. 23, 24. It was not written for his Sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed. As if he had said, "It was recorded of Abraham's Faith, "that 'twas imputed to him for Righteousness, that God was pleased with "and accepted it, for our Encouragement "to imitate him therein: That when the "Promise made to him thro' Faith should "be fulfilled, we thro' Faith might become Partakers of it, and thereby Righteousness might be imputed to us also.

As to the grand Question, Whether Circumcision, and the Observance of the Mosaic Law (being both of Divine Appointment) were not intended to be necessary Conditions of obtaining the latter Part of the Promise made to Abraham? The Answer is, That nothing like this appears in History, that therefore the Jewish Converts were to blame in insisting thereupon. Thus we find St. Paul arguing, Rom. iv. 9, 10. We say, that Faith was reckoned unto Abraham

Abraham for Righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in Circumcision or in Uncircumcision? Not in Circumcision, but in Uncircumcision. As Abraham therefore by Faith without Circumcision pleased GOD and obtained the Promise; it is not improbable, that they also should obtain the Blessing Promised without Circumcision, who walk in the Steps of that Faith of our Father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised, v. 12. And the very same Reasoning will hold good with respect to the Mosaic Law, that the Observance thereof could not be a necessary Condition of obtaining the general Blessing promised. Accordingly we find the Apostle applying it, Gal. iii. 17. This I say, The Covenant that was confirmed before of GOD in CHRIST (the promised Seed) the Law, which was Four hundred and thirty Years after cannot disannul, that it should make the Promise of none Effect.

BUT might not that Law (you'll ask) be made a necessary Condition without disannulling the Promise? To which I answer, That the Nature of the Law itself will determine this Question in the Negative. Because it was adapted to the particular Circumstances of the Israelites, considered as a separate People: It was given with Design to keep them separate, during the corrupt idolatrous State of the Gentile World. It was added because of Transgressions (with which the World abounded) till the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made, Gal. iii. 19. And till then only,

is very evident ; because the Continuance of a Law designed to keep them separate, under a Dispensation intended to unite in one Body both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and to make both Partakers of one common Blessing, is absurd and ridiculous. The very Supposition of such a Law, existing in its full Force and to be continued always, would necessarily exclude either *Jews* or *Gentiles* from their Title to that common Blessing promised equally to both. For it would be absurd to suppose one necessary Condition of a *common* Covenant to be such, as obliged them to have no *Communication* with one another. Therefore (as the Apostle argues, *Rom. iv. 14.*) *If they which are of the Law be Heirs, (as such) not only Faith is made void, but also the Promise is made of none Effect :* Because the Law, which virtually forbids Union betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, would exclude the *Gentiles* from inheriting the Blessing with them. And so *vice versa*, If the *Gentiles* be Heirs ; the *Jews* continuing still bound by their Laws of Separation, must in Consequence thereof be excluded from partaking of the Inheritance with the *Gentiles*. And herein we see the Force of that Reason, which *St. Paul* gives, why many of the *Jews*, who waited for the promised Seed, did not obtain the Blessing promised thro' him ; *Because they sought it by the Works of the Law, Rom. ix. 32.* Which Law, persisted in after the promised Seed was come, served rather to exclude them from it. Hereby likewise we understand, why sub-
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jection to the Law was reckoned a State of *Bondage*, Gal. iv. 3, 9. under which the *Jews* were said to be kept *shut up*, Gal. iii. 23. not only, as the Law consisted of many burdensome and (in their own Nature) needless Ordinances; but also, as it detained them, (so long as it continued in Force) from inheriting the promised Blessing.

HENCE it is, that St. Paul, in the disputed Passage, Gal. iv. 21, &c. compares the Case of the *Jews*, persisting in the Law, to that of *Ishmael*. *Ishmael* could not be Heir according to the first Part of the Promise; because, tho' he was the Seed of *Abraham*, he was so by a *Bond-woman*; and the Son of the *Bond-woman* was not to inherit with the Son of the *Free-woman*: The *Israelites*, likewise considered as a People separated by their Law from the Rest of the World, could not, as such, be Partakers of the latter Part of the Promise, which was intended to unite all Men in one Body, and make them Partakers of one common Blessing. As in the first Case, there was a *natural Imperfection*, by which *Ishmael* was excluded: So in the latter, there was a *moral one*, by which the *Jews* excluded themselves; for tying themselves up strictly to their Laws of Separation, they were disqualified to partake of a Covenant, which in its own Nature could admit of no Separation at all. Whilst the Law therefore was their Mother, their Case might justly be compared to that of *Ishmael*, the Son of the

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Bond-woman, who (as such) had no Title to inherit. This led the Apostle in the Passage now before us to draw a Parallel between the one Case and the other. Far from saying, That by *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, in the Book of *Moses*, were meant the Two Covenants; far from suggesting, that any secret spiritual Meaning was couched under that plain Piece of History; he argues (as is usual) from one parallel Case to another, and illustrates the Case in Dispute by its Correspondency to a known Case, that was out of Dispute.

ACCORDINGLY the Apostle's Meaning may be explained thus, v. 21. " I presume
 " that you, who desire to be under the
 " Law, are acquainted with it. v. 22.
 " Consider then what is written concerning *Abraham's* Two Sons, *Isaac* and
 " *Ishmael*, one of which he had by a
 " Bond-woman, the other by a Free-woman. v. 23. The one excluded from inheriting, as Son of a Bond-woman; the
 " other, as Son of the Free woman, inheriting by Covenant, or Promise. v.
 " 24. This Case is parallel to, and may
 " (by a Figure with which Men use to
 " express one Thing by another) be made
 " to represent the Two Covenants: The
 " one from Mount *Sinai*, viz. The legal
 " Covenant, thro' which the Unbeleiving
 " *Jews* are still in a State of Bondage, by
 " its Laws of Separation shut up, and
 " during their Subjection thereto disqualified to inherit the general Blessing.
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“ Their Case therefore through the Law
 “ is like that of *Ishmael* through *Agar*.
 “ *Verse 25.* The State then of *Agar*
 “ and her Son answereth to the present
 “ State of *Jerusalem* formed upon the
 “ Legal Covenant, for thro’ it she is in
 “ Bondage with her Children. *v. 26.* But
 “ *Jerusalem* which is from Above, or the
 “ New State formed upon the second Co-
 “ venant, is free, wherein there is no
 “ Distinction of Families, no Laws of Se-
 “ paration; but as common Parent of us
 “ all, takes in all Nations, all the Fami-
 “ lies of the Earth, as Heirs of one com-
 “ mon Blessing. *v. 27.* Wherefore *Isaiab*
 “ foretelling this glorious Increase of the
 “ Church of GOD, *chap. liv. 1, &c.* breaks
 “ forth, and says, *Rejoyce thou Barren that*
 “ *bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that*
 “ *travailest not: for the Desolate hath many*
 “ *more Children than she which hath an Hus-*
 “ *band.* *ver. 28.* We then, Brethren, and
 “ all that embrace it through Faith, as
 “ *Isaac* was, are Heirs according to Pro-
 “ mise, *ver. 29.* But the unbelieving *Jews*
 “ resemble the excluded Son in all Re-
 “ spects; for as then *Esau*, that was born
 “ after the Flesh, persecuted *Jacob*, that
 “ was born after the Spirit; So they valu-
 “ ing themselves upon being of the Seed
 “ of *Abraham* according to the Flesh, are
 “ for maintaining strictly their Laws of
 “ Separation, and would thereby exclude
 “ you, to whom the Promise equally be-
 “ longs; but by that very Means they
 “ are still in a State of Bondage, and
 “ ex-

“ exclude themselves, ver. 30. So that
 “ what the Scripture says, with Respect
 “ to Ishmael, is justly applicable to them,
 “ Cast out the Bond-woman and her Son: for
 “ the Son of the Bond-woman shall not be
 “ Heir with the Son of the Free-woman.”

THIS is the Allegory, this is the Ap-
 plication. There is no *mystical Meaning*
 sought for, nor scrued out of the *plain*
Words of Moses. The Use which the Apo-
 stle makes of them in this and other
 Places, needs no other Construction, but
 the *literal and obvious* one. His Design
 here is to illustrate one Case by another
 parallel to it. And in this he is not sin-
 gular, but is justified therein by the *com-*
mon Rules of Reasoning and Discourse,
 and by the frequent Practice of the most
 strict Philosophical Writers.

The End.



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